C. G. 793 hereditary rights. The priest, called khevis beri "elder of the valley," khutsi "priest" or dek'anozi "dean," pronounced the ceremonial prayers and sacrificed the sheep and cows C. G. [782] offered as victims. The kadagi or dzhvaris C. G. meene "interpreter," "tongue of the dzhvari," [791] a kind of shaman, pronounced the will of the khat'i. The medroshe "standard bearer" or khat'is pekhi "foot of the khat'i" carried the sacred banner (drosha) on festive days. A special functionary attended to the brewing of the sacred beer, a custom borrowed from the C. G. Ossetes. The beer was drunk at the annual [796] festivals which were attended by all the "serfs" of the khat'i.

In Svanetia the functions of the Khevsur khevis beri were performed by priests not regularly ordained and without any theological training; they were called bap (from Greek C. G. pappas). The numerous ancient churches [771] were neglected and were only used for storing the vessels, vestments and books relating to the divine service; these were jealously C. G. guarded from alienation. Many originally 796 Christian feasts and Saint's days were celebrated with prayers, drinking of home-made brandy and eating of sacrificed animals and fancy bread of different traditional shapes. C. G. Similar rites were observed on the commem- [769] oration days of the dead which were performed at fixed intervals.

c o 776 seem to be the same sort of angel, Strangely enough, God hesitated for some time before granting the requests of these groups to punish the brutal attackers.

It seems evident that the original conception of the Vastyrdzhi and Vatsilla in the popular religion of the Ossets was that of two members of the host of tutelary spirits and this conception is still distinctly recognizable, although they have been elevated to the rank of Christian saints. There is very little doubt that the relation between the Narti heroes and these two tutelary spirits, as it appears in the Narti legends, is the result of an arbitrary distortion of the original conception.

The Ossets worship two other saints: Tutyr, the protector and ruler of wolves, who obviously is identical with Saint Theodore, and the wonderworking, miraculous killer Nikkola who corresponds to Saint Nicholas.

c o. 796 Besides their Christian and Mohammedan holidays, the Ossets celebrate a number of festivals of pagan character which are dedicated to their popular gods, or rather, spirits. They make the distinction between "male" and "female" c o. festivals. The male festivals are attended only [782] by men offering bloody sacrifices, whereas at the female festivals which are celebrated only by women, the sacrificial gifts consist of milk c o. and cheese. Some of the feasts are celebrated at 796 home, others at or near places considered 778 sacred, such as mountain plateaus. caves. groves, or trees. Among the sacred places and

C.O. 796 778 objects the dzuar enjoys the highest degree of reverence. The word dzuar is of Georgian origin and means "the cross," then "the saint," and further "a sanctuary." Churches are often built at the side of, or in the place of, such old sanctuaries, the most famous of which, Rekom, is situated between the village Zai and the Zai glacier. It is described as a very small, low, square room with two tiny windows. The roof is covered with straw, the walls and ceilings are adorned with old rugs and priestly garments. There are all kinds of things on the floor, such as images of saints, candles, jewelry, arrows, etc., and similar things are also to be seen outside of the sanctuary. In the immediate neighborhood there are numerous stone houses covered with plank roofs serving as shelters for the pilgrims who stay there for two weeks from the first Saturday in May, sacrificing, eating, dancing and singing.

C.O. 796 782 At the Ossets' festivals the killing of animals is accompanied by appropriate sacrificial hymns. The sacrifice is performed by the eldest member of the assembly who, before the slaughtering, burns the sign of the cross on the animal's muzzle and behind its right ear with a glowing coal. A special feature of festivals [273] is the drinking of K'umäl, the native beverage of millet, araq, brandy, and bägäny, beer. The flesh of the animal is eaten, the bones piled up in a heap, the blood is collected in a vessel and buried, and the animal's head is hung on a tree. The sacrifice in honor of

c. o. 796 782 Fälwära, the guardian spirit of domestic animals is performed in stables and sheds, not in the fields.

c. o. 796 All the festivals which are dedicated to guardian spirits, are characterized by old popular customs and special rituals which have no bearing whatsoever upon the two religions adopted later. At the celebration in autumn of the harvest festival in honor of Khualar-Dar, the god of the harvest, the master of the house ties together and carries home a sheaf of different grains (wheat, rye, millet, barley, etc.), which weighs more than 200 pounds. At home, in the midst of his family, he thanks the god of the harvest for the rich crop, prays for a similar cop in the coming years, and then after this prayer he rejoices in his family in the god's honor. The sheaf is taken apart, the single stalks of the different kinds of grain are carefully laid together and different beverages are brewed from the seeds. At one time of the day the mistress of the house walks up and down with a wooden vessel containing several kinds of grain, and prays to the god to send more millet and other kinds of grain to the house and to drive away the rats and all other noxious rodents.

c. o. 796 785 In honor of Tutyr, the guardian spirit of the wolves (and sheep), a day of fasting is observed on a Monday by the whole family. In the evening, after they break their fast, a shepherd appears and recites a prayer in which he invokes the spirit to bestow, as a reward for the strict

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796 fasting, the favor that the wolves be deaf and
785 voiceless, immova ble and weak, and that the sheep of the worshippers be the ghosts of the spirit and enjoy his mercy. (From the wording of the prayer we may conclude that in his capacity as ruler of the wolves, Tutyr is also thought to possess the power of keeping the wolves from the sheep.)

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796 The festival devoted to the guardian spirit of the family is usually celebrated at night. After a goat has been slaughtered at midnight, the member of the family walk to the barn where they pray to the spirit, thanking him for the blessings of the past year and imploring him to grant new blessings in the year to come. Then they drink the millet beverage and eat a dish of goat's liver wrapped in the intestines and roasted on the grill, keeping completely silent during the ceremony. Afterwards, the men return home and eat their festival meal.

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796 It is of special interest that the worship of the god of health, Kuni-Bara, is exclusively
782 reserved for the women. After a sick person
562 has recovered, the woman of the house and those of neighboring families go to a tree which is considered sacred. They take cheese cakes and a jug of milk along and a dried sturgeon (Käf), which had been hanging above the head of the sick person, with a silver coin fastened to the fish. The oldest of the women, followed by the others, puts the cheese cakes down under the tree, which she sprinkles with milk while

C. O. 796 782 562 while singing sacred songs. After this ceremony they sit down under the tree, eat the cheese cake and the fish and hang on a few perforated coins on the tree as a votive offering to Kuni-Bara. Any person daring to steal these coins, would be affected with the disease of the former patient.

C. O. 796 562 Another festival with which only women are concerned, is the "feast of the virgins," which is celebrated at the end of autumn in the house of some old woman. It is only superficially linked with the Christian religion, insofar as it is celebrated in honor of Mary (Mairäm), "the Mother of God." The girls bake cakes with different fillings in the house of the old woman. The oldest girls takes one and prays first to Mary and then to the guardian spirit of the house and to other spirits for a bridegroom and for protection against sickness and wicked women. Afterwards, each girl takes one of the cakes and looks at its filling. When the filling is cheese, it means that her husband will be a rich owner of cattle, when it is a corn filling, the girl is destined to marry a rich farmer, and so on.

C O 796 On New Year's eve, the last, or next to the last, Friday of December, the Ossets start celebrating the New Year. For the holiday the housewife prepares beverages, a large cake and a number of small cakes formed in the shapes of ploughs, harrows, wheels and other utensils which give expression to their hope for a good harvest. At the approach of dusk the whole family sits down around the

C. O. 796 hearth-fire, and the master of the house recites a long prayer in which he gives thanks to God and asks for blessings for the coming year. During the night the young people go from house to house, throwing corn into the houses, singing and expressing good wishes for prosperity and happiness. At daybreak of New Year's day the master of the house kindles a fire of straw in the courtyard in honor of his deceased parents, who thereby are provided with the necessary fire for the whole year. The day is spent in much merry making, eating and drinking.

C. O. 796 782 776 Only one day, the Wednesday between Christmas and New Year, is dedicated to the worship of an evil spirit, the Devil. The ceremony starts in the evening with the killing of a lamb in front of the door of the house. The spirit is invoked not to do any harm to the cattle and to the other property of the master of the house and to accept an offering of a piece of roasted meat of a lamb and a glass of brandy. During that night one should strictly avoid mentioning the name of the Supreme God, lest the wrath of the evil spirit be provoked. The Devil proper of the Ossets, who is called Khairag is like the well-known figure of the devil of other countries, a good-natured foolish fellow who can easily be duped (der dumme Teufel in German).

C. O. 771 177 This survey* of the most characteristic features of the religion of the Ossets,

*[cf. cat. 116, pp. 565-574 -- Analyst]

8: Lužbetak E-4 (no date) 1951 RH1 Caucasia RH1

essential parallels—characteristic of the Turco-Mongolian family are: the almost complete absence of mother-right and totemistic practices, the emphasis placed on the joint-family and the male members, special rights for the first-born son, importance of the male head of the family and the *patria potestas*, the disadvantageous position of the female sex, blood-feuds, exogamy, the *kalym*, which is usually paid in live-stock, the dread of incest, the severe penalties for sexual offenses, fireplace ceremony at weddings, the high esteem for the bride's virginity, the unusual craving for male children, the importance of the bridal procession, etc.

There is also a religious connection between the North Caucasians, the Indo-Europeans, and the Turco-Mongols, a connection that confirms our claim of the existence of a social connection between the three groups. It is not only the *similarity* of the religions of the three groups that we must keep in mind but also the intimate connection, the *organic* connection, between the nomadic social and religious forms. The solidarity which exists among the members of a sib, the great longing for male children, blood-feuds, the levirate, the *patria potestas*, the wedding custom of walking around the fireplace, and many other practices are fundamentally connected with ancestor worship and cult for the dead. Ancestor worship is one of the essential features of the religion of the Indo-Europeans, the Turco-Mongols, and the North Caucasians. Moreover, among all three groups ancestor worship is linked up with the worship of the fireplace. Another very essential part of the pastoral nomadic religion was the custom of sacrificing horses. W. Koppers has shown the great similarity between the horse-sacrifices of the Indo-European and Altai peoples;[48] R. Bleichsteiner proved beyond question the existence of the practice throughout the highlands of Caucasia.[49] Horse-sacrifices among the Indo-Europeans and the North Caucasians are certainly of Inner Asiatic origin.

Thus we see that even though the North Caucasians are not pastoral nomadic in the economic sense—the economy of the steppes is impossible in the mountains, especially in the unfertile valleys of the Caucasus—they are pastoral nomadic in their social organization. *A connection between the North Caucasian society and that of Inner Asia is beyond question.*

3. Vestiges of More Ancient Cultures In the Marriage and Family Customary Laws of the North Caucasians

As is only natural, the deeper we delve into the history of the marriage and family *adats* the more obscure the history becomes.

First of all there are the so-called mother-right vestiges which we must consider. It is interesting to note that the intensity of these vestiges among the three different groups of Caucasians (Northwestern, Northeastern, and Southern)

[48] W. Koppers, *op. cit.*, pp. 12 f, 18—22. See also W. Koppers, "Pferdeopfer und Pferdekult der Indogermanen," *Wiener Beiträge zur Kulturgeschichte und Linguistik*, IV (1936), pp. 280—411.

[49] "Rossweihe und Pferderennen im Totenkult der kaukasischen Völker," *Wiener Beiträge zur Kulturgeschichte und Linguistik*, IV (1936), pp. 412—495.